

Exhibit 10

Hoboken man pleads guilty to participating in 2015 vote-by-mail fraud scheme

By **Corey McDonald** - October 8, 2019 12:08 pm

A Hoboken man pleaded guilty in federal court this morning to his role in a citywide vote-by-mail fraud scheme during the 2015 municipal elections, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced.



William Rojas, 69, had been **charged in January** of violating the federal Travel Act by using the mail system to aid the voter bribery scheme. He admitted to his role on Tuesday before U.S. District Judge William J. Martini in Newark federal court.

Rojas is one of several to plead guilty to similar charges in a widespread investigation that has ensnared a number of political operatives in the Mile Square City, and resulted in a **guilty verdict** in the trial of Frank “Pupie” Raia earlier this year.

Raia, the Hoboken developer and longtime figure in the local political scene, was found guilty in June of orchestrating the scheme during the 2013 election – when he ran for an at-large council seat at sought to loosen the city’s rent control laws via ballot referendum.

His scheme, which sources said began in 2009 when state law changed to ease requirements for voting by mail, involved paying low-income residents \$50 to vote as he directed on vote-by-mail ballots.

Sentencing for Raia, which was originally scheduled for October 3rd, has been postponed and a hearing on a motion for a new trial is currently set for October 21st.

While Raia's trial focused on the 2013 election, Rojas' guilty plea is specifically related to the 2015 election, when the city's six ward council seats and three school board seats were up for grabs.

From September through November of that year, Rojas worked for an unnamed candidate for the Hoboken City Council and paid voters \$50 to cast mail-in ballots as directed for the November 2015 Hoboken municipal election, prosecutors said.

Rojas would provide these voters with their applications and told them they would get paid \$50 for casting mail-in ballots for the unnamed candidate. He would then review those ballots and, after the election, deliver checks to those voters, according to authorities.

Rojas could not be reached for comment. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing is currently scheduled for February 20th.

Matthew Calicchio is another city resident who admitted to participating in the scheme in 2015. He has since pleaded guilty, has testified against Raia and is scheduled to be sentenced on November 7th, officials said.

During testimony, Calicchio told prosecutors he had worked for candidate Eduardo Gonzalez, who unsuccessfully ran for the 5th Ward council seat.

Calicchio also told prosecutors that he worked for a council candidate who directed him to arrange payments for voters, which were drawn from a campaign account of a second candidate's campaign account, according to his charging documents.

In a statement, Mayor Ravi Bhalla applauded the U.S. Attorney's Office for securing their fifth plea or convicting in their ongoing probe into voter fraud.

"Paying cash for votes will never be tolerated in Hoboken, and I thank the federal authorities for helping root out this illegal activity from our City," he said.

"We must redouble our efforts to stamp out voter fraud and protect the integrity of our elections."

Editor's Note: This story was updated with a comment from Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla.

Follow Corey McDonald on Twitter [@cwmcdonald_](#)